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SUBJECT: NETHERLANDS: RISK TO COALITION GOVERNMENT OVER JSF
DECISION

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(SBU) The Dutch parliament is to decide in the next two days whether to approve the procurement of two Joint Strike Fighter (JSF) test planes. The vote depends on the position taken by the coalition partner Labor (PvdA) party, as neither the JSF advocates nor the opponents have a majority. Faced with strong opposition from within its own rank and file, the PvdA is reluctant to consent to the test plane purchase because it believes this would be a de facto commitment to buy JSF in the future. However, the entire coalition government, including all PvdA ministers, has already agreed to the intended procurement, so the question is whether the PvdA is ready to defy the government. Key PvdA spokesmen stated the party was not aiming for a crisis and still hoped that a compromise could be worked out. "We will enter the debate with an open mind," said PvdA floorleader Mariette Hamer. If the PvdA persists in its opposition, however, it could bring down the government.
GALLAGHER